

# Water Taxi Report

## Harbor Commission Ad Hoc Committee

City Council Study Session

June 24, 2014

Doug West, Harbor Commissioner

# Objective

- *Assess the feasibility of a public water taxi system in Newport Harbor on a pilot basis*
- Harbor Commission ad hoc committee formed:
  - Doug West
  - Dave Girling
  - Joe Stapleton

# Fact Finding Process

- Conducted a series of four public meetings from March 25 to June 11, attended by ~25 Newport Beach residents and harbor business representatives
- Received additional public comments at April, May and June Harbor Commission meetings

## Fact Finding Process (cont.)

- Commissioners and staff met individually with representatives from:
  - Duffy Boats
  - Lear Boats
  - Willard Marine
  - Hornblower Cruises and Events
  - LA County Beaches and Harbor
  - Fort Lauderdale Water Taxi Company
  - Uber
  - Ralph Rodheim
- Gary Sherwin of Newport Beach and Company attended two public meetings

# Fact Finding Process (cont.)

- Thorough review of the 2009 report of the Newport Beach Water Taxi Exploratory Committee with commentary from **John Corrough**, principal author of that report

## WATER TAXI SYSTEM CONCEPTUAL FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA



PREPARED BY  
THE NEWPORT BEACH WATER TAXI  
EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE  
September 2009

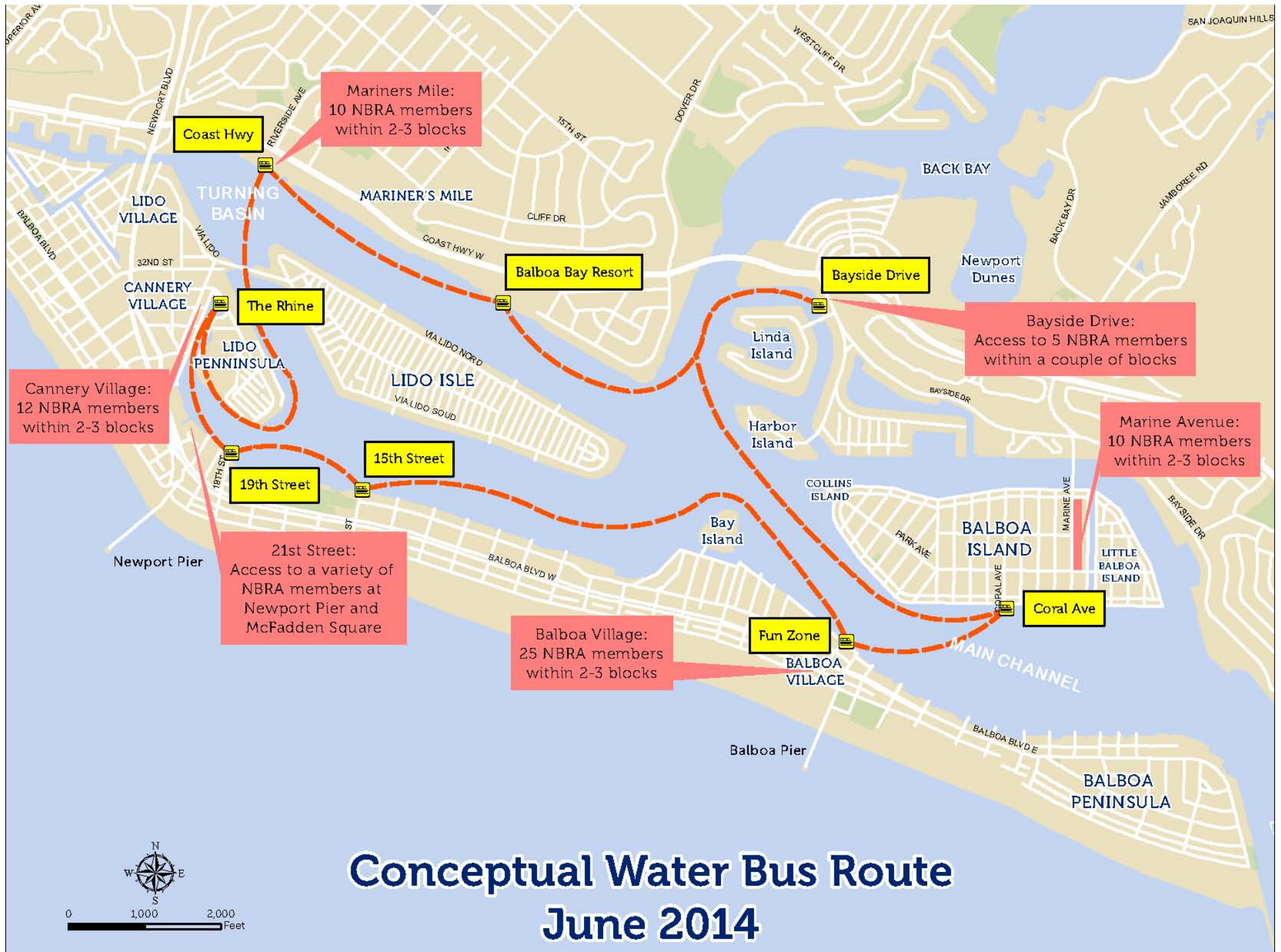
# Principal Conclusions

- Significant interest in a public water-borne transportation system in Newport Harbor
- Committee has no means for estimating actual demand (ridership) for such a system
- Seasonal demand will vary significantly

## Principal Conclusions (cont.)

- Size of Newport Harbor and 5 mph speed limit makes an “on-demand” service model very challenging , and not practical, at least in early phases
- Scheduled loop route operation (“*water bus*”) is probably the most feasible operations model
- “Flag Stops” along the loop route could enhance the service level
- Hybrid operating model with on-demand service might evolve *beyond the pilot phase* using smaller boats and Uber-like technology







## Principal Conclusions (cont.)

- At least 4 boats are necessary to achieve adequate service levels on the proposed loop, 2 pairs travelling opposite directions
  - ~90 minute loop time
  - ~45 minute service interval at each stop

# Principal Conclusions (cont.)

- Coast Guard and ADA regulatory costs will be significant
  - CG: Certified passenger vessels and staffing (captain and deck hand)
  - ADA: At least some docks and all vessels must be in compliance
- Cost Estimation
  - Vessels: ~\$150k per vessel (Marina del Rey style boat)
  - Staffing: ~\$35/hr. Captain  
~\$20-25/hr. Deckhand (on dock or boat)
  - Docks: Significant capital cost for dock reconfiguration  
Several docks must be ADA compliant
  - Other: Signage, marketing etc...

## Principal Conclusions (cont.)

- Virtually certain water bus service could not break even on fare revenue
- Other sources of revenue might include:
  - Advertising aboard the vessels
  - Contributions from harbor area businesses benefiting from the passenger traffic
  - City/County / State / Federal subsidies

# Fort Lauderdale Water Taxi



The screenshot shows the Fort Lauderdale Water Taxi website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: SCHEDULES & FARES, BUY TICKETS, WATER TAXI INSIDER, and CHARTERS. Below this is a green header with the company name 'Water Taxi' and a logo of a boat. The main content area features a map of Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood, with various stops marked by colored circles and letters (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, A, B, C, D, W). Text on the map indicates 'Northern Loop Connection Starts at 9' and 'Hollywood Route Starts at 5 A'. To the right of the map is a smaller inset map. Below the map, there are links for 'MAPS & STOPS', 'DIRECTIONS', and 'FAQ'. A large yellow box contains promotional text: 'Your ticket allows UNLIMITED BOARDING ALL DAY from any of our stops!', 'Cruise & Save at over 60 restaurants and shops!', and 'Show your Water Taxi ticket and receive a DISCOUNT\* on your purchases!'. A link 'View Larger, Printable Map (Click Here)' is also present.

- Private company - no subsidy
- Tour component
- 26-60 passengers
- \$22 day pass
- 3 hour loop route
- 10 AM to midnight
- 12 boats – Peak season
- 6 boats – Off season





# Marina del Rey Water Bus



## FOR A FUN WEEKEND Ride the Marina del Rey WaterBus

Park your car and take our WaterBus for a unique water's-eye view of Marina del Rey. Eight boarding stops throughout the Marina offer opportunities to shop, dine, and recreate in one of the most beautiful Southern California residential and tourist areas. Bikes and strollers welcome aboard.



### 2014 WaterBus Schedule

#### JUNE 19 - SEPTEMBER 1

Thursday: 11am - midnight  
Fridays: 11am - midnight  
Saturdays: 11am - midnight  
Sundays: 11am - 9pm

#### HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

July 4th: 11am - midnight  
Labor Day: 11am - 9pm

### 2014 Concert Schedule

#### SYMPHONIC THURSDAYS

July 10: 7pm - 9pm  
July 24: 7pm - 9pm  
August 7: 7pm - 9pm  
August 21: 7pm - 9pm

#### POP SATURDAYS

July 19: 7pm - 9pm  
August 2: 7pm - 9pm  
August 16: 7pm - 9pm  
August 30: 7pm - 9pm

In some respects, the Marina del Rey Water Bus system provides an operating model around which a similar Newport Beach system might be developed.

- Seasonal @ 4 days per week + special events
- Successful, after several years of testing and tweaking

# Marina del Rey Water Bus



- Pontoon boat
- Coast Guard certified
- Front and side loading
- Accommodates bikes & strollers
- ADA compatible



## WaterBus Boarding Locations

- |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 FISHERMAN'S VILLAGE</b><br>13755 Fiji Way<br>Shopping, restaurants, free weekend<br>daytime concerts                    | <b>5 DOLPHIN MARINA</b><br>13900 Panay Way, Dock Gate, #C-200<br>Restaurants, attractive residential area<br>with anchorage |
| <b>2 BURTON CHACE PARK</b><br>13650 Mindanao Way<br>Beautiful park with Café, free<br>Thursday and Saturday evening concerts | <b>6 ESPRIT 1</b><br>13900 Marquesas Way, Dock Gate,<br>Slip #B-602 1/2<br>Attractive residential area with anchorage       |
| <b>3 WATERFRONT WALK</b><br>Fire Station #110 Dock -<br>4433 Admiralty Way<br>Hotels, restaurants                            | <b>7 HARBOR AT MARINA BAY</b><br>14015 Tahiti Way, Dock Gate, #B-3100<br>Luxury apartments with new anchorage               |
| <b>4 MARINA "MOTHER'S" BEACH</b><br>4101 Admiralty Way<br>Sandy beach, great for picnics and BBQs                            | <b>8 DEL REY LANDING</b><br>13800 Bora Bora Way, Fuel Dock Gate<br>Fuel dock, maritime general store                        |

# Marina del Rey Water Bus

- Private operator (Hornblower Cruises and Events) under contract with LA County
- Operates late June thru Labor Day
- Thursday to Sunday + special events
- \$1 one-way fare
- \$30 season pass
- 43,000 passengers 2013 season
- Annual LA County subsidy >\$400k



# Suggested Next Steps

- Transportation Consultant
  - Develop operations / business model
  - Draft RFP
- Keep Harbor Commission Involved
  - Public forum
  - Sounding board
- Involve Newport Beach and Company
  - *Marketing...Marketing...Marketing*

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
FOR  
MARINA DEL REY  
WATERBUS SERVICE



Community and Marketing Services Division  
Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors  
13837 Fiji Way  
Marina del Rey, CA 90292

December 3, 2013

# Questions?

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